

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

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## **2007 California State Parks Director's Recognition Awards Announced**

**SACRAMENTO** – California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman announced the recipients of the 2007 Director's Recognition Awards. The awards go to those who have distinguished themselves for their extraordinary achievements.

"We want to recognize California's public servants at State Parks who day in and day out go well beyond their job requirements," said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. "It is this kind of dedication that has made California State Parks one of the finest park systems anywhere in the world."

The awards are presented once a year. The winners were selected by the director from among nominations submitted to Sacramento headquarters by the department's employees from across the state. Among the award recipients are individuals who recognized needs and found ways to meet the needs against all odds; some identified long-standing problems and found creative solutions; and there were those who built unity among diverse groups and thus reached goals beyond expectations.

"I am proud to recognize these talented and innovative individuals at State Parks," Coleman said.

The awards will be presented from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, in the Resources Agency Auditorium at 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Sacramento.

### The Olmsted Award for Leadership and Vision

**John Foster**, Manager, Archaeology, History & Museums Division, (Sacramento) has been an ardent force within the cultural resource community and has taught many people to continue to preserve California's treasures in the face of rapid growth. John promotes the relationship between parks and a healthy society by continuous education and interaction with staff, school children, museums, universities, historical and archaeological professional associates, and his international work with Mexico for the betterment of their parks.

### The Hill Award for Inspiration

**Gary Watts**, Park Superintendent V, Inland Empire District, (Riverside, Orange & San Bernardino Counties) has been an inspiration in the Inland Empire District for the last ten

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years. His leadership led to endowments that protect resources, acquired massive land acquisitions, and encouraged positive relations with other stakeholders. Gary was able to create two new State Parks – Wildwood Canyon, close to San Bernardino, and San Timoteo near Riverside.

#### The Drury Award for Professional Integrity

**Andy Zilke**, Park Superintendent, Oceano Dunes District, (San Luis Obispo County) has 30 plus years of public service and has provided the public with safe and educational experiences. He was in the first ranger defensive tactics class in 1979 and for the last 28 years has taught arrest control techniques. Andy's mission to provide quality off-highway vehicle recreational opportunities at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area has been met with many challenges. Andy displays incredible integrity in all aspects of life.

#### The Mott Award for Innovation

Network Services Unit – Information Technology Services

**Robert Blesi**, Manager

**Shawn Brown**

**Steven Childress**

**Gary Fryer**

**Ve Kao**

**Edward Reese**

**Jesus Almeida**

**Matt Burghdorf**

**Steve Davis**

**Jeremiah Harvey**

**Thomas Moore**

**Phillip Usrey**

This award acknowledges the effort and dedication by these individuals (Sacramento) to California State Parks for applying unusual skill, technical ability, and imagination in their pioneering use of inexpensive, wireless technology to distribute network connectivity throughout various park units throughout the State of California. Their contributions are greatly appreciated and will benefit the department for many years to come.

#### The Dewitt Award for Partnership

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Education Team (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

**Dawn Hayes**, Coordinator

**Sacha Lozano**

**Sonya Padrón**

**Elizabeth Love Reisenbichler**

**Lisa Emanuelson**

**Seaberry Nachbar**

**Michele Roest**

**Lisa Uttal**

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Education Team is acknowledged for collaborating with California State Parks and the education community to create effective marine and coastal interpretations. Their work for the last ten years in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Cruz counties has resulted in various educational showcases at visitor centers, park trails, and along the California coast. Millions of visitors will be delighted and educated as they enjoy these interpretive displays and the splendor of these beautiful places.

#### The Ingenuity Award

**Craig Sanderson**, Heavy Equipment Mechanic, Lake Oroville Sector, Northern Buttes

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District (Butte County), created a way to adjust the cable tension on the moorings for ten floating campsites and five floating restrooms on Lake Oroville. The water level on the lake fluctuates as much as 200 feet within a few months and the device he invented utilizes an electric winch and pulley system mounted on the deck of a pontoon boat. Craig's ingenuity saves countless man hours and prevents many potential injuries.

**Special Commendations** will be presented to the following:

**Cosco Busan – San Francisco Bay Oil Spill Response Team**, Marin

District (Marin County) and Diablo Vista District (Sonoma County)

Members of the Response Team:

**David Matthews, Gorge Beglitsoff, James Dexter, Bree Hardcastle,**

**Casey Lee, Roy McNamee, Allyn Schafer, John Crossman, Christina Freeman,**

**Deana Freeman, Cyndy Shafer**

This commendation is for the rapid and professional response to a severe and widespread major oil spill in the San Francisco Bay in November of 2007. The oil spill caused significant environmental damage to Angel Island State Park, Eastshore State Park, and Mt. Tamalpais (Alameda and Marin Counties). Under severe working conditions, they worked long hours and recovered injured wildlife, dealt effectively with multiple agencies and major network news press, and interacted professionally with the public. They demonstrated that State Parks confronts and make the best of disasters that threaten wildlife, people, and parks.

**Shasta State Historic Junior Docent Volunteer Program**

**Cindy Anderson**, Ed.D, Principal & **Patti Furnari**, Teacher/Stellar Charter Schools

**Jim Lightner**, Principal, & **Michelle Scarbrough**, Teacher/Shasta Elementary

Because of their efforts over the past eight years helping students become living-history docents in Shasta County, this special commendation acknowledges the principals' and teachers' tremendous dedication to California State Parks. Student docents learn about the role that Shasta and its citizens played during the California gold rush, and they help thousands of visiting students and the public to understand, appreciate, and emotionally connect with their cultural heritage.

**Vikingsholm Log Roof Restoration Project Team**

Members of the Restoration Project Team: **Ron Hansen**, Maintenance Chief

**Peter (Ace) Flewelling, Michael Byram, Gary Harp, Benjamin Espy, Catherine**

**Lewis, Michelle Smith, Rosemary Yracheta**

This team rebuilt the Vikingsholm log roof in Emerald Bay, Lake Tahoe (El Dorado County). This project took much research, planning, preparation, skill, and creativity. Vikingsholm is a registered national historic treasure and thanks to them, millions of visitors will now be able to see the roof as it was historically meant to be.

**Special Act or Special Service Awards**

**Don Solleder**, Research Analyst (GIS), Colorado Desert District (San Diego County)

Don is honored for his bravery in October of 2007, when he went alone into the burning Boucher Hill fire-lookout tower at Palomar Mountain State Park and extinguished the rooftop fire. This incident occurred amid the blazing multiple fires in San Diego County and not only

was the historic structure saved that day, but he also helped save park residences and the critical telecommunications infrastructure that enables rangers and lifeguards in San Diego, Imperial, and Southern Riverside counties to radio the Southern Communications Center.

**Gary Reese**, Environmental Services, Colorado Desert District

Special thanks to Gary for his bravery when he assisted Don Solleder save the burning Boucher Hill fire-lookout tower at Palomar Mountain State Park. Gary was instrumental during the fire when he helped save park residences and the critical telecommunications infrastructure with Don.

**Timothy Murphy**, State Park Ranger, Russian River District

Ranger Murphy is being honored for his heroic act performed on September 2, 2007, when he responded to a report of a child trapped under a fallen 30-foot cypress tree at South Salmon Creek Beach near Bodega Bay (Sonoma County). Tim spent more than forty minutes digging under seven feet of wet sand, which was highly unstable and put himself at serious risk. When the boy was uncovered, Tim provided rescue breathing until the paramedics took over medical care of ten year old Jonathon Waldrup. When faced with one of the most challenging and hopeless situations imaginable, Tim never gave up.

#### Special Presentation: Volunteer Awards

Medallion Award for Superior Achievement

Big Sandy Creek Project, San Joaquin Sector, Central Valley District

**Mark Holland**, Trail Construction Coordinator, Central California Off-Road Cyclists

Poppy Awards for Exemplary Volunteer Service

Big Sandy Creek Project, San Joaquin Sector, Central Valley District

**Toby Hurst**, President, Back Country Horseman's Association

**Lt Colonel Mark Van Dyke**, Pilot, CA Army National Guard

**Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Gatewood**, Co-Pilot, CA Army National Guard

On June 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, the final section of a long-awaited recreational trail system near Millerton Lake State Recreation Area (Fresno County) was lifted into place by a California National Guard Blackhawk helicopter. In placing three bridge sections into place over the rugged Big Sandy Creek in a gorge, the helicopter finished an 11-year effort made possible by dozens of volunteers and a caravan of mules. The completion of this 18-mile trail through the Sierra foothills could not have been accomplished without the efforts of volunteers (totally more than 4000 hours) from many user groups, private businesses, State departments, and Federal agencies.

For more information about California State Parks, go to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

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